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ABSTRACT

A practicum was designed to address the problem of limited opportunities for parents to participate in their children's preschool education and the dichotomous interpretation between parents and preschool staff of what constitutes satisfactory parent participation within the preschool program. The goal of the practicum was to have parents express satisfaction with the quality and opportunities for parent participation. Thirty parents and four staff members in the prekindergarten program of a public school district participated. A number of activities were implemented, including surveying parent interests and availability, distributing a monthly newsletter, developing a parent bulletin board, and inviting parents to curriculum planning and grant writing sessions. Program staff also received training on strategies for collaboration between parents and schools. End-of-year parent surveys indicated that parent participation and satisfaction grew as the variety of parental participatory opportunities increased. The majority of staff members reported a positive change in attitude regarding appropriateness of parent involvement within the preschool. (Three appendices contain the Illinois State Board of Education annual program review, the parent survey, and survey results.) (WP)

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Developing Positive Parent Participation In Preschool Programming

by

Pamela Kraus

Cluster 56

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A Practicum I Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier:

Robert Bunt

Dr. Robert Bunt

Superintendent School District 158 (Retired 7-1-94)

12514 Grandview Drive

Huntley, IL 60142

8-29-94

Date

This practicum report was submitted by Pamela Kraus under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

12-14-94

Date of Final Approval of Report

Roberta Silfen

Dr. Roberta Silfen
Adviser

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I wish to extend my sincere thanks to Dr. Roberta Silfen, my adviser, who offered suggestions and advice through the process of proposal to implementation to report. Sincere thanks also go to Dr. Ellen Stern, coordinator of Cluster 56, who provided guidance and encouragement.

DEVELOPING POSITIVE PARENT PARTICIPATION
IN
PRESCHOOL PROGRAMMING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	vi
CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION	1
Description of Community	1
Writer's Work Setting and Role	2
II STUDY OF PROBLEM	4
Problem Description	4
Problem Documentation	4
Causative Analysis	6
Relationship of the Problem to the Literature	8
III ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS	11
Goals and Expectations	11
Expected Outcomes	11
Measurement of Outcomes	12
Mechanism for Recording Unexpected Events	13
Description of Plans for Analyzing Results	13
IV SOLUTION STRATEGY	15
Discussion of Possible Solutions	15
Evaluation of Possible Solutions	18
Solution Selected	20
Calendar Plan	21
V RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	26
Results	26
Discussion	28
Recommendations	31

REFERENCES

Appendices

A ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ANNUAL PROGRAM REVIEW 31

B PARENT SURVEY 37

C FY 93 YEAR-END PARENT SURVEY TABULATION OF SELECTED ITEMS 44

ABSTRACT

Developing Positive Parent Participation in Preschool Programming. Kraus, Pamela, 1994: Practicum Report, NOVA Southeastern University, Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Parent School Participation/Parent Involvement/School Communications/Parent School Partnerships/Parent Advisory Councils.

This practicum was designed to address the problem of limited opportunities for parents to participate in their children's preschool education and the dichotomous interpretation between parents and preschool staff as to what constitutes satisfactory parent participation within the preschool program.

The major goal of the practicum was that parents, preschool staff and the Illinois State Board of Education would each express satisfaction with the quality and number of opportunities for parent participation in the preschool program.

The writer developed opportunities for inservice training for staff, increased communications between parents and staff and developed channels for parents to directly participate in program planning.

Analysis of the data revealed that parent participation and satisfaction grew as the variety of parental participatory opportunities increased. In addition, the majority of staff members reported a positive change in attitude regarding appropriateness of parent involvement within the preschool program.

* *

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The setting where this practicum took place was in a public school district (grades PK - 12) located approximately sixty miles from a large metropolitan city in the midwestern United States. Previously a rural area made up of dairy farms and vegetable farms, the village of 2700 people is rapidly becoming a bedroom community for the industries that have moved westward from the metro area. Close proximity to an east-west tollway has resulted in projections for growth in the next ten years that will increase the present school enrollment of 860 to 9,000 students.

The majority of students in the school district come from white, middle class families. Approximately 60% of all high school seniors continue their education beyond high school. Although some drug use is known to exist in the community, alcohol consumption by minors is the most prominent problem dealt with by parents and school administrators. Gangs do not exist within the school or community at the present time.

Writer's Work Setting and Role in the Preschool Program

The school district is comprised of one K-8 building and one PK & 9-12 building. Administration offices for the district are attached to the bus barn.

The prekindergarten program for "children at risk" was established within this school district in 1986 when the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) made funds available through a grant application process. School districts must reapply annually for continuation of funding.

The current program was fully funded through the ISBE. The FY 94 budget was $82,000. Children aged three to five years old, who had been identified as being "at risk" in at least two of the following categories: cognitive, gross motor, speech/language, social development and adaptive behavior were eligible to attend the program.

Thirty children were enrolled in the program, 15 attended the a.m. session and 15 attended the p.m. session. The program met Monday through Thursdays, with Fridays used for program planning and home visits. The program staff included one full time certified teacher, one full time teacher aide, a speech/language therapist employed three days a week and a social worker employed two days a week.

This writer held the position of Assistant Superintendent within the school district and wrote the annual prekindergarten "children at risk" grant proposal. Once the grant was approved, all expenditures were monitored by the Assistant Superintendent, and all communications with the ISBE regarding the grant were conducted through this office. The annual screening for children at risk was also coordinated by the author. In conjunction with the grade school principal, the author also oversaw the daily operations of the prekindergarten "children at risk" program.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Parents and staff agreed that parent participation in the preschool program increased the quality of the educational experience of children. The problem that existed within this setting was that staff and parents had different perceptions regarding the role of parent participation.

The staff viewed parents in a traditional role, as recipients of information or as an audience for their childrens' performances. Attendance at registration night, open house, parent conferences, holiday programs and field trips was considered appropriate and sufficient parental participation by the preschool staff.

Many parents, however, sought a more participatory role. They indicated a desire to interact with the students, help determine goals for the program and prioritize expenditures. Several parents had reported that they felt intrusive when they attempted to participate during a classroom visit.

Through annual program reviews covering the last three years, the ISBE indicated that parent participation in writing the annual grant and in programming throughout the year, was not adequate.

As families moved into the school district from urban areas having more progressive preschool programs, the demand for more parent participation within the program continued to grow.

The problem identified for the practicum was how to increase both the quantity and quality of parent involvement within the preschool program, while developing support and collaboration from preschool staff for this new paradigm of parent participation.

Problem Documentation

A variety of evidence supported the existence of a problem related to the opportunities for parent participation in the preschool program and the quality of those opportunities.

The annual FY 93 year-end parent survey (Appendix C) indicated that 8 out of 18 parents responding sought a more fulfilling and active role as participants in their children's preschool program. Parents' comments expressed a desire for more information regarding curriculum and a need for inservice training so their time spent in the classroom would be productive and appropriate.

The annual program evaluation (Appendix A) done by the ISBE repeatedly found that quality parent participation was missing in the preschool program. Ironically, using the same ISBE

evaluation form, the program staff indicated that a high level of parent participation and satisfaction existed within the current program.

Individual staff and parent interviews held by the author also verified a discrepancy of opinion regarding the extent of parent participation within the prekindergarten program.

Causative Analysis

Several causes for parent dissatisfaction with the preschool program were identified. First, staff members held different perceptions from many parents of what was appropriate parent participation. All four staff members received their original certification to work in schools more than 25 years ago. Neither the State of Illinois, nor the school district have required teachers to take additional course work in order to renew certification. Although the school district encouraged all staff to attend workshops and conferences to increase professional growth, the preschool staff was slow to participate in these activities. The traditional view of parents' role in education was held by the program staff. They failed to recognize or acknowledge a changing paradigm.

A second cause for parent dissatisfaction was the result of families moving into the school district that had prior experience with other preschool programs. As the community grew, the preschool population became more heterogeneous and parental expectations more diverse. Parents who had experienced a participatory role in their children's education expected to continue in this role.

Limited ongoing opportunities for parent participation was also identified as a cause of dissatisfaction. Parents required a variety of choices regarding types of participatory activities and the times at which they were offered. Many parents commented on the parent survey that they were unable to attend conferences and other activities because they were scheduled during the day. Other parents commented that they were only asked to participate once or twice at the beginning of the school year but never again throughout the year.

Finally, the lack of any formal parent organization or advisory committee prohibited the exchange of ideas, suggestions and information among parents and staff and caused dissatisfaction with the program.

In summary, lack of parental involvement and dissatisfaction with the programs resulted from several situations: teachers viewed non-traditional parent participation as intrusive, parents

with previous experience in other preschool program had heightened expectations for their role in the program, a variety of participatory opportunities were not available to parents, and parents were not aware of classroom procedures and policies.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

The professional literature provided a variety of information regarding problems with parent participation in preschool programming.

McAfee (1987) discussed the importance of the preschool staff respecting all parents regardless of their opinions and views. He stressed how judgemental attitudes of the preschool staff towards parents, regarding the parental role in the preschool program, could discourage parents from participating and supporting the preschool program. Parents' eagerness to increase their involvement in their children's preschool program over and above notes and telephone calls was discussed by Joyce (1987). Through interviews, parents expressed their preference for a variety of activities that would have them interact directly with the children, staff and other parents.

Morrison (1988) considered three levels of parent involvement. Task orientation is the type of parent involvement that teachers are most comfortable with. This includes the participation in activities such as being an aide, fund raisers, clerical help and field trip help. Process orientation consists of parents being encouraged to participate in activities important to the educational process such as curriculum planning, instructional material review and selection, and committee membership. Although parents may feel empowered with this level of participation, teachers and administration often feel their authority is threatened by this level of parent involvement. The third level of parent involvement, developmental orientation, helps parents develop skills which will help children, schools and teachers.

Manburg (1989) stated that in order to establish an effective parent participation program the staff must be convinced of its worth and importance to the success of the whole preschool program. He also discussed the value of many small parent involvement events scheduled at various times, versus one large event, in an effort to involve a greater number of parents.

Moles (1987) listed barriers to parent participation which include home responsibilities, work schedules, late notice of meetings and small children. Although parents and state agency

officials consider the roles of advocate and decision makers as appropriate for parents, Moles reported that teachers, administrators and school board members did not see parents filling that role. He suggested that opportunities for confrontation and loss of authority may make school personnel uncomfortable with this type of parent involvement.

All of the literature supported the importance of parent involvement in the education of children.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The following goals and outcomes were projected for this practicum. The primary goal was to have parents of students in the prekindergarten program express satisfaction with the quality and opportunities for parent participation in the program. In addition to the parents, it was hoped that the ISBE would also find the level and quality of parent participation appropriate. A secondary goal for the practicum was that program staff would accept and support an expanded role of parent participation within the preschool program.

Expected Outcomes

At the end of the practicum implementation:

1. All parents responding to the year-end parent survey would indicate opportunities for parent participation to be adequate or better.
2. The ISBE annual program review would report a satisfactory level of parent participation exists within the program.

3. Twenty out of 30 parents would participate in at least one parent activity within a three month period.
4. All four staff members would agree to seek parental input regarding programming on a scheduled basis.
5. Two of the four staff members would state that they felt comfortable with increased parent participation.

Measurement of Outcomes

The year-end parent survey was developed by the preschool staff (Appendix B). It was mailed to all parents of children in the preschool program. Parents were asked to respond and return the survey within a week, in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided by the school. The fourteen item survey was a forced choice instrument with space provided for comments after each question. All surveys remained anonymous.

The ISBE used the Prekindergarten Program Review for Classroom Programs form (Appendix A) for evaluating all aspects of the district prekindergarten program for "children at risk" It was a scaled response instrument. Questions 27 through 35 were specifically concerned with parent/community involvement. The ISBE provided the personnel to complete the program review. The review was of an advisory nature and did not influence funding of the program in any way.

Attendance records were kept by program staff to record parent participation during program planning sessions held each Friday during the implementation period.

Personal testimony was solicited and recorded by the author to determine the degree of comfort each staff member reported in relation to the increase in parent participation within the preschool program.

Mechanics for Recording Unexpected Events

All possible outcomes could not be predicted, therefore a mechanism for recording the unexpected was developed. A daily record of events regarding parent participation was kept. This log was examined at the end of the implementation period and the positive and negative aspects of these unexpected events were discussed by the staff.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion of Possible Solutions

Parent expectations for involvement in the preschool program were not being met. Parents were looking for a broader variety of experiences and opportunities to participate in program decision making. The preschool staff continued to view parent participation as an "audience" activity with expectations limited to open house attendance, parent conference attendance, accompanying students on field trips and attendance at holiday programs.

The literature provided a variety of possible methods for integrating the school district's present model of parent participation into the new paradigm of parent participation.

Manburg (1985) discussed how important scheduling and variety of activities are to the success of a parent participation program. Parents' work schedules and other obligations may prevent them from participating in an offered event, however, if many different opportunities for participation are offered at many different times of the year and day, the chances of including a majority of parents is greatly increased.

Moles (1987) cited several ideas for increasing parent participation. A parent resource center that offers videos, books and other child development materials may draw parents to the school. Making parents feel important and valued can be accomplished through notes, telephone calls and home visits. This in turn can foster a parent's desire to participate in a school program. He also discussed the importance of teacher training that enables teachers to collaborate with parents both in and out of the classroom, building strong parent/school relationships.

Parents as the primary teacher is a concept examined by Rich (1988). Training parents to enhance at home, the skills taught in school, results in a more effective curriculum and recognizes parents' role in the education of their children. She also discussed the importance of training teachers to accept the role of parents in the decision making process of program development.

In addition to the solutions suggested by the literature, this writer developed the following possible solution strategies:

1. A parent survey could determine the degree of involvement each parent is able to provide and pinpoint the areas of interest of each parent.
2. Written task descriptions for classroom volunteers could be given to parents. This would help them understand

what is to be done when they volunteer for specific activities and increase their self-confidence as a program volunteer.

3. A parent advisory council (PAC) could be established to provide a formalized model for parent participation.
4. Preschool family night could be arranged with a pot luck dinner and entertainment provided for parents, children and staff.
5. Parents could be required to come into the classroom to drop off children and to pick them up.
6. A parent bulletin board could provide parents with child development information, notice of participatory opportunities, notice of upcoming events and a space for parents to communicate with other parents.
7. Holiday programs could be presented in both afternoon and evening.
8. Parents could be included in the Friday planning sessions. Their ideas and comments would be considered when planning the weekly activities and when the annual grant application was written.
9. Families could be invited to participate in field trips.
10. Parent education meetings addressing topics of interest regarding child development could be presented as day and evening programs.

Evaluation of Possible Solutions

Upon review of the solutions suggested by the literature and the author, some solutions were very workable while others were not appropriate at the time for the current preschool program.

The scheduling of holiday programs and other programs of interest could easily be offered as a day and evening presentation. Teachers and students work very hard to prepare for holiday and end of the year programs. An opportunity to perform twice would be appreciated by all. Program staff all live in close proximity to the school so returning for an evening program would not be a hardship for staff.

Scheduling activities throughout the year rather than clustering then at the beginning and end of the year could easily be accomplished when developing the annual school calendar.

Training parents to reinforce the skills their children are learning in school and providing them with information regarding issues of child development could easily be provided in afternoon and/or evening sessions.

Written task descriptions to facilitate parent participation in the classroom, could be completed through a summer curriculum grant provided by the district, however this could not occur before the practicum took place.

Teachers could be required to attend workshops and conferences that feature parent/school collaboration strategies.

The formation of a PAC for the prekindergarten program would have been premature for this practicum. The staff needed to receive appropriate training before establishing this power base for parents.

In an effort to get parents into the classroom to see what is happening, the program could require all parents to accompany their children into the classroom when dropping them off for school.

If parents are required to enter the classroom when bringing children to class as suggested above, then a parents' bulletin board could be provided and designed as a tool for exchanging information.

Family involvement activities could be centered around meals. Parents would be more inclined to attend an evening activity if they knew that dinner was provided.

Parents could be included in program planning sessions.

Description and Justification for Solutions Selected

The majority of the previously mentioned possible solutions were found to be workable. The following were implemented to achieve the goals of the practicum:

1. In order to establish the types of parent involvement desired, parents were surveyed to determine interests and time slots available.
2. Using the parent interest survey to establish topics and times, workshops and training were offered to parents.
3. Parents were provided with a list of lending library materials which they could check out personally or by phone.
4. A newsletter was sent home at the beginning of each month, listing daily activities and opportunities for parent involvement.
5. A parent bulletin board was created to provide information for parents, with an area designed for parents to share information between themselves and the staff.
6. Parents were asked to come into the classroom when dropping off or picking up children.

7. Parents were invited to conference with staff on Fridays to gather input for curriculum planning.
8. Parents were included in the annual grant writing process.

All of these above solutions were directed to improving parents' participation in the preschool program. The following solutions were chosen to develop the knowledge and understanding within the preschool staff that was required in order to adapt to the new paradigm of parent involvement:

1. Program staff were required to attend workshops and conferences that taught collaborative strategies for parent and schools.
2. Program staff worked with parents developing curriculum and lesson plans that included parent participation.

Report of Action Taken

The steps taken to improve parent participation in the preschool program were a systemic progression of the activities outlined in the calendar of events which was part of the practicum proposal. A report of this action taken, condensed into a monthly summary follows.

During the first month of this practicum, the parents of the children enrolled in the prekindergarten were surveyed to determine their level of satisfaction with the current program and to also determine in what ways parents were interested in expanding their role within the program.

To prepare the staff for a change in program models, staff attended a workshop presented by the regional Education Service Center (ESC) titled, "Parent School Partnership: What It Takes To Make It Work". Several school districts presented programs showcasing their district's strategies for increasing parent involvement in their schools.

Parent communication was encouraged through the development of a monthly newsletter and changes in policy that required parents to accompany students into the classroom. Parents were encouraged to participate in creating a parent bulletin board as a networking system.

The second month of the practicum implementation saw the establishment of a lending library for parents who could either come in and check out materials or select from the printed list in the newsletter and request the materials by telephone.

Several workshops and inservice programs were scheduled for staff and parent participation. Babysitting services were provided on site. Scheduling was varied from afternoon to

evenings to Saturday morning in an effort to meet the needs of the whole group.

Parents were notified of opportunities to participate in lesson plan writing and grant writing. Fridays were designated as parent/teacher collaboration days. Parents were invited to suggest themes and activities for learning experiences and to contribute suggestions for the FY 95 grant application.

Individual and group staff conferences were held weekly with this author to discuss and support staff efforts to broaden the parental role within the prekindergarten program. The ISBE also conducted their annual review of the prekindergarten program. This involved a day long visitation with a written report to be filed with ISBE and forwarded to the District. Finally at the end of the second month a family picnic was held. Originally scheduled in the park adjacent to the school site, the picnic was relocated to the school cafeteria due to rain. All family members, including siblings and grandparents, and other caregivers were invited to attend with the students and staff. Musical entertainment and food was provided through grant funds.

In the final month of the practicum many of the above mentioned activities; workshops, lesson planning, bulletin board networking and staff conferencing continued. A field trip to the zoo was planned and again all siblings and additional relatives plus other caregivers were invited to attend with the students

and their parents. Transportation was provided through grant funds by the school district.

In the final week of the third month parents were asked to complete the parent survey (Appendix B). These results were compared to the results of the pre-implementation survey and to the previous year's parent survey. The ISBE written report regarding the FY 94 program evaluation was received. These results were compared to the FY 93 evaluation report. All information gained through the parent survey and ISBE evaluation report, plus information obtained through parent and staff interviews completed by this writer, was compiled, compared and analyzed to determine if expected practicum outcomes were achieved.

Unexpected Events and Roadblocks

During the implementation of the practicum, two unexpected events and one roadblock took place. First the staff was surprised when, in an effort to get parents into the building and the classroom, a very negative response occurred when it was suggested that parents accompany children into the building. Objections were based upon lack of convenient parking and younger siblings left in the automobile. When a parking area near the

classroom entrance was reserved for parents and when parents were assured that the younger siblings were also welcome to visit and share the first half hour with the staff and students, a noticeable increase in parents accompanying children into the classroom occurred.

The most unexpected event developed during the second month of implementation when the classroom teacher requested to be transferred to a different position for the 94/95 school year. At this point she had attended several workshops and conferences regarding parent participation in programming and had experienced parents participating in lesson planning and in program delivery. She felt her role as instructor had been diminished and the structure and discipline in her classroom disrupted by the presence of parents in the classroom. Other staff members and this writer assured her that her role had actually been increased considering the number of adults who now, in addition to the children, looked to her for guidance and direction. The benefits to the school district from increased parent participation were also reviewed, however, she held fast to her paradigm of what role parents have in their children's education. Her request for reassignment was deferred until the end of the school year.

A roadblock that was encountered during the 8th week occurred when it rained on the day the "family fun lunch" in the

park was scheduled. The high school gym had been identified as an alternate site in case of bad weather, however, a volleyball game had also been rescheduled to be played there for that date. The staff's problem solving skills were put to the test and fortunately everyone was able to enjoy the food and entertainment in the high school cafeteria.

Chapter V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

Parents and staff members had different expectations for the role of parents in the prekindergarten program. Parents sought to be actively involved in program planning and delivery. Staff saw parents in the traditional passive "audience" role. Parents also complained that the opportunities for parent participation were limited and scheduled without consideration of family schedules. The ISBE also found the prekindergarten program lacking in sufficient opportunities for parent participation.

This practicum provided educational opportunities for the prekindergarten staff to learn new ways to include parents in the education of their children. It also developed activities that allowed parents greater voice in the program planning and delivery process.

The following presents the results obtained in this practicum for each outcome:

Outcome 1

All parents responding to the year-end parent survey (Appendix B) indicate opportunities for parent participation to be adequate or better.

Twenty-six of the 30 parents returned year-end surveys. Of these 26 respondents, 5 reported the parent participation program to be exceptional, 15 felt it was very helpful and 6 reported it to be adequate. No survey respondents considered the parent participation inadequate. This compares to the FY 93 year-end survey, when 18 surveys were returned and 8 respondents found parent participation inadequate.

Outcome 2

The ISBE annual program review (Appendix A) would report a satisfactory level of parent participation exists within the program.

A written report detailing the ISBE on site program review was received during the third month of practicum implementation. On items 27 through 35 of the evaluation document, which cover parent/community involvement, all items were scored "exemplary", "achieved" or "progressing satisfactorily",

Outcome 3

Twenty out of 30 parents would participate in at least one parent activity within a three month period.

Twenty-eight parents participated in at least one parent activity within the three month implementation period.

Outcome 4

All four staff members would agree to seek parental input regarding programming on a scheduled basis.

All four staff members collaborated with parents in writing lesson plans and establishing the budget for FY 95.

Outcome 5

Two of the four staff members would state that they felt comfortable with increased parent participation.

Three of the four staff members stated that they felt comfortable with increased parent participation within the prekindergarten program.

Discussion

A 26% increase over FY 93, in the number of parents returning the FY 94 year-end parent survey, resulted in 26 of the parents responding. All respondents felt the opportunities for parent participation were adequate or better. The 26% increase in returned surveys is an indication of improved parent participation and interest. The practicum met the first outcome, with 26 of all prekindergarten parent surveys returned reporting a program rating of "very helpful" to "exceptional".

The second outcome was met when the ISBE's annual program review found that all items covering parent involvement were scored "exemplary", "achieved" or "progressing satisfactory". Item 27, regarding a process for promoting parent and community support; item 28, related to parent communications and item 33,

regarding the parent resource library were all scored as "exemplary" by the ISBE. Item 29, related to parental participation in the classroom and item 32, regarding the parent as the primary educator, were both rated as "achieved" by the ISBE. The remaining items; 29, parents involved in classroom activities; 30, parents informed of community resources and services and 34 and 35, regarding the book and toy lending library were all described as "progressing satisfactorily" by the ISBE program reviewer.

The response to outcome number three was higher than expected, therefore, outcome number three was achieved. Eight more parents than the 20 predicted, participated in at least one parent activity during the three month implementation period. Fifteen parents actually participated in two or more activities.

In response to outcome number four, all four staff members participated with parents in writing lesson plans on a weekly basis and created the FY 95 budget collaboratively, thus achieving outcome number four. The weekly log indicates that at times four to five parents participated. The log also reflects teacher satisfaction and delight with ideas the parents presented for consideration.

Outcome number five was met at the end of the practicum implementation when three staff members expressed their satisfaction with the increased level of parent participation

and indicated they enjoyed the new model of service delivery and would like to continue using it in the coming school year. Unfortunately the classroom teacher was not one of the three satisfied staff members. Although the outcome was met, the teacher formally submitted her request for transfer to a higher grade level.

Morrison (1988) discussed how teachers and administrators often feel a loss of authority when parents participate directly in the development and delivery of programs. The teacher reported that she felt she had lost the ownership of her classroom and could not handle the "chaos" created by parents' presence in the classroom.

Moles (1987) also addressed this problems through his discussion of what program roles parents see as appropriate versus what program roles administrators and board members feel are appropriate for parents. Parents saw themselves as advocates and decision makers, while administrators and board members did not share this view.

All five of the projected outcomes were achieved. Parent/school interaction was greatly improved. Outcome results, positive comments made by parents and staff and observations of increased parent participation were all indicators of the practicum success.

Recommendations and Dissemination

A few recommendations for implementation of this practicum in another setting would include:

1. The implementation process would be easier if the parent participation was designed to be part of the program from the beginning the school year. The need to change procedures and roles in the middle of the year could be avoided.
2. Implementing this practicum in a full day preschool program would allow more time for planned activities and reduce the flow of students and adults in and out of the classroom.

Three other preschool programs are located within the school districts boundaries. One is run by the park district and two are run by churches. A copy of this practicum report has been provided to each program director. All three program directors have expressed interest in the practicum and a workshop, sponsored by this school district, will be presented to the staff and parents of the other preschool programs in the near future.

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APPENDIX A

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
ANNUAL PROGRAM REVIEW

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Early Childhood Education
Program Development and Operations
100 North First Street
Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001

PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM REVIEW FOR CLASSROOM PROGRAMS

CONTACT PERSON: _____

POSITION: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: ( ) -
Area Code

TOTAL NUMBER OF PROGRAM SITES: _____ TOTAL NUMBER OF SITES VISITED: _____

TOTAL NUMBER OF CLASSROOMS: _____ TOTAL NUMBER OF CLASSROOMS VISITED: _____

DATE OF VISIT: _____

NAME OF REVIEWER: _____ SIGNATURE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

DAYTIME TELEPHONE NUMBER: ( ) -
Area Code

Summary is to be completed at end of review. Copy the following pages as needed.

SUMMARY:

OVERALL, this project:

- ☐ 0- Needs a great deal of technical assistance. *(List specifics under C.)*
- ☐ 1- Needs a small amount of technical assistance. *(List specifics under C.)*
- ☐ 2- Will continue to improve without on-site technical assistance.
- ☐ 3- Is a good program.
- ☐ 4- Is performing at a very high level.
- ☐ 5- Is exemplary.

Write a narrative response for each of the following questions and attach to this form:

A. What are the strengths of this project?
B. What areas need improvement?
C. What are your recommendations/suggestions?
D. Do you have any additional comments and/or observations about the project?

SITE VISITED | TEACHER VISITED

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM REVIEWERS

Based on your observation, please complete this form by circling the appropriate numeral or by circling yes or no. Only one response can be circled; the response must be selected from the available scale.

Scale: 0= Not Observed/Not Applicable; 1= Not Started; 2= Just Beginning; 3= Progressing Satisfactorily; 4= Achieved; 5= Exemplary

SCREENING:

1.	Cooperation with Child Find/special education personnel is in evidence.	0 1 2 3 4
2.	Parent and child are made to feel comfortable at screening.	0 1 2 3 4
3.	Parent is informed of results within reasonable time period.	0 1 2 3 4
4.	Opportunities are available for assessment as needed during the year.	0 1 2 3 4
5.	Entry criteria reflects at risk characteristics.	Yes No
6.	Instruments are appropriate for criteria.	Yes No
7.	Family history is part of assessment.	Yes No
8.	Medical history is part of assessment.	Yes No
9.	Teaching staff are involved in assessment.	Yes No
10.	Screening results are available to teaching staff.	Yes No

PHILOSOPHY:

11.	The program has developed and adopted a written early childhood education philosophy.	0 1 2 3 4
12.	The philosophy is included with other program information given to new families.	0 1 2 3 4
13.	Staff are made aware of and oriented to the program philosophy.	0 1 2 3 4
14.	Staff actively support the program philosophy.	0 1 2 3 4
15.	The philosophy is reflective of the community being served and addresses community needs and concerns.	0 1 2 3 4

ADMINISTRATION:

16.	There are written personnel policies, including job descriptions, staff development plans and staff evaluations.	0 1 2 3 4
17.	The administration supports and promotes regular staff development.	0 1 2 3 4

The administrator demonstrates commitment by:

18.	Providing leadership and resources.	0 1 2 3 4
19.	Hiring staff in accordance with ISBE regulations.	0 1 2 3 4
20.	Presenting a strong case for budgetary support and the importance of early childhood education.	0 1 2 3 4

EVALUATION:

21.	Educational plans for each child are based on needs identified through assessment and observation.	0 1 2 3 4
22.	Children's special interests, abilities, growth and progress are regularly discussed with parents.	0 1 2 3 4
23.	There is a process for regular evaluation of the program and for communicating results to staff, administration and community.	0 1 2 3 4
24.	Parents, staff and community are involved in program evaluation.	0 1 2 3 4
25.	Evaluation results are used in program planning.	0 1 2 3 4
26.	Program evaluation reports are made to the school board.	

Scale:	0= Not Observed/Not Applicable 1= Not Started	2= Just Beginning 3= Progressing Satisfactorily	4= Achieved 5= Exemplary

PARENT/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

27.	There is a process for promoting parent and community support.	0	1	2	3	4
28.	Parents are informed about the program through newsletters, bulletin boards, phone calls, notes and parent conferences.	0	1	2	3	4
29.	Parents are frequently involved in classroom activities.	0	1	2	3	4
30.	Parents are informed of community resources and services.	0	1	2	3	4
31.	There is evidence of linkages with Head Start, day care, literacy, adult education and other social agencies.	0	1	2	3	4
32.	The role of the parent as the child's primary educator is emphasized and strengthened.	0	1	2	3	4
33.	A parent resource library is available.	0	1	2	3	4
34.	A children's book lending library is available.	0	1	2	3	4
35.	A toy lending library is available.	0	1	2	3	4

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

36.	There are written goals and objectives for the program which are reflective of the program philosophy.	0	1	2	3	4
37.	The posted schedule reflects a developmentally appropriate daily routine.	0	1	2	3	4
38.	Written plans provide a variety of developmentally appropriate activities and materials that emphasize concrete, experiential learning.	0	1	2	3	4
39.	A contagious enthusiasm for living and learning permeates the classroom atmosphere.	0	1	2	3	4

The integrated curriculum includes appropriate activities which promote child development in the areas of:

40.	Emotional growth	0	1	2	3	4	5
41.	Physical growth	0	1	2	3	4	5
42.	Social growth	0	1	2	3	4	5
43.	Intellectual growth	0	1	2	3	4	5
44.	Language	0	1	2	3	4	5

In addition, activities promote the following:

45.	Emergent literacy	0	1	2	3	4	5
46.	Creativity	0	1	2	3	4	5

ACTIVE LEARNING INVOLVES:

47.	Opportunities for spontaneous conversation	0	1	2	3	4	5
48.	Art media (including easels in classroom)	0	1	2	3	4	5
49.	Dramatic play	0	1	2	3	4	5
50.	Blocks and constructive play	0	1	2	3	4	5
51.	Manipulatives	0	1	2	3	4	5
52.	Picture books	0	1	2	3	4	5
53.	Fluid materials (sand/water)	0	1	2	3	4	5
54.	Large muscle play	0	1	2	3	4	5
55.	Appropriate transitions	0	1	2	3	4	5
56.	The use of routine tasks for learning						

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Scale:	0= Not Observed/Not Applicable	2= Just Beginning	4= Achieved
	1= Not Started	3= Progressing Satisfactorily	5= Exemplary

STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

57.	Staff interact positively with children.	0	1	2	3	4
58.	Staff encourage independence, interdependence, and reasoning and questioning skills. This is demonstrated in lesson planning and implementation.	0	1	2	3	4
59.	Staff use positive guidance techniques.	0	1	2	3	4
60.	Staff adapt to unexpected changes in schedules and use "teachable moments."	0	1	2	3	4
61.	Staff know the warning signs of abuse/neglect, the reporting procedures and take appropriate action.	0	1	2	3	4
62.	A staff training/inservice plan is in place and implemented.	0	1	2	3	4
63.	Pre-K through 2nd grade staff communicate about philosophy and curriculum.	0	1	2	3	4
64.	Staff demonstrate continuing professional development.	0	1	2	3	4
65.	Two adults are involved with the children at all times.	0	1	2	3	4

FACILITY

Concern for Safety of Child in Evidence:

66.	Fire and tornado evacuation plans are posted.	Yes	No
67.	Rooms are in good condition.	Yes	No
68.	Equipment is in good condition.	Yes	No

Concern for Health of Child in Evidence:

69.	Rooms and bathrooms are clean.	Yes	No
70.	Proper ventilation is available in all seasons.	Yes	No
71.	Room is well lighted.	Yes	No
72.	Bathroom is in or adjacent to classroom.	Yes	No
73.	Nutrition awareness, healthful eating and personal habits are fostered by the program.	Yes	No

ROOM IS APPROPRIATE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOM

The classroom:

74.	Has source of running water in the room.	Yes	No
75.	Is large enough to accommodate the number of children enrolled.	Yes	No
76.	Has space for large group activities.	Yes	No
77.	Has space for small group activities.	Yes	No
78.	Is divided into well defined areas.	Yes	No
79.	Has space for solitude and privacy.	Yes	No.
80.	Has space for storage of children's belongings.	Yes	No
81.	Has both carpeted and noncarpeted areas.	Yes	No
82.	Is pleasant for children and has balance of hard and soft elements (curtains, pillows, furniture).	Yes	No
83.	Has provision available for isolation of ill child.	Yes	No

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

84.	Furniture size is comfortable for children.	Yes	No
85.	Materials are age appropriate.	Yes	No
86.	Materials are accessible to children on low, open shelves.	Yes	No
87.	Materials are in sufficient supply.	Yes	No

Scale:	0= Not Observed/Not Applicable	2= Just Beginning	4= Achieved
	1= Not Started	3= Progressing Satisfactorily	5= Exemplary

Scheduling, curriculum, and instruction reflect a balance of:

88.	Child initiated activities	0	1	2	3	4
89.	Teacher-directed activities	0	1	2	3	4
90.	Individual, small group, and large group work	0	1	2	3	4
91.	Small muscle skills	0	1	2	3	4
92.	Large muscle skills	0	1	2	3	4
93.	Active and quiet times	0	1	2	3	4
94.	Field trips and neighborhood walks	0	1	2	3	4
95.	Community resources and visitors	0	1	2	3	4
96.	Cultural awareness activities	0	1	2	3	4
97.	Indoor and outdoor play	0	1	2	3	4

OUTDOOR PLAY AREAS:

Outdoor play areas are:

98.	Large enough for vigorous motor play.	Yes	No
99.	Used daily except during inclement weather.	Yes	No

Outdoor play areas are safe as evidenced by:

100.	An enclosed fence or physical barrier.	Yes	No
101.	Climbing apparatus low to the ground (under 8 feet).	Yes	No
102.	Padded surface (wood chips, rubber, etc.) beneath climber and swings.	Yes	No
103.	Smooth, hard surface for running and wheel toys.	Yes	No
104.	Shaded area; grassy area available.	Yes	No
105.	Glass and debris-free surface.	Yes	No

Outdoor play areas are equipped for various areas of physical development:

106.	Wheel toys	Yes	No
107.	Variety of balls	Yes	No
108.	Climbing apparatus and swings.	Yes	No

APPENDIX B

PARENT SURVEY

Dear Parents,

Would you please fill out this survey and return it to the preschool by May 3
We would like to know your thoughts and feelings about the program your child has been a part of this year. You can answer each question by checking the appropriat answer and you can also elaborate upon your answer in the space under each questio

Thank you,

[redacted]

1. How much do you feel your child benefited from the program this year?

   Not at all ___ A little ___ Very much ___

2. Do you feel the program provided your children with enough varied experiences?

   Insufficient variety ___ Adequate variety ___ Great variety ___

3. How would you rate the screening of your child before entering the program?

   Inadequate, did not understand ___ Adequate, but did not understand ___
   Adequate & reasonably understood ___ Very good & understood ___

4. How would you rate the parent involvement program?

   Inadequate ___ Adequate ___ Very helpful ___ Exceptionally useful ___

5. What type of parent involvement are you interested in?

   _____ Classroom aide
   _____ Story reader
   _____ Story teller
   _____ Demonstrator
   _____ Attend field trips
   _____ Help write preschool grant
   _____ Attend Workshops/conferences
   _____ Help plan activities with teachers
   _____ Speakers on child development
   _____ Family nights
   _____ Other _____
   _____

6. How would you rate the amount of communication between the preschool and yourself?

Inadequate ___ Adequate ___ Very informative ___ Exceptionally Informative ___

7. How did you feel about the children coming to preschool only 4 days? Do you feel 4 days of preschool attendance per week was appropriate?

___ I felt it was adequate
___ I thought the children needed a 5 day program
___ Other. Please explain.

8. If your child was involved in the speech program, how would you rate it?

Less than adequate ___ Adequate ___ Very helpful ___ Exceptionally beneficial ___

9. How would you rate the transportation that we could provide?

___ The transportation service was more than adequate.
___ The transportation service adequately met my child's needs.
___ The transportation service was inadequate. I am concerned because:

10. It has been suggested that next year we provide the snacks for the children How do you feel about this?

___ I think it is a good idea.
___ I like the way snacks have been handled, because it allows for a choice if a child has special needs.
___ Other. Please explain.

11. Did the parent conferences adequately communicate your child's progress and needs?

Less than adequate ___ Adequate ___ Very informative ___ Exceptional Beneficial

12. Do you feel the preschool staff adequately met the needs of yourchild?

Less than adequate ___ Adequate ___ Very helpful ___ Exceptionally beneficial ___

13. How would you rate the program at the preschool that your child has partic: in this year?

Less than adequate ___ Adequate ___ More than adequate ___

14. The state is trying to get more monies for these programs for next year. I we were to receive more money how would you like to see it spent?

___ More teaching staff
___ More parent assistance
___ More equipment (playground, AV, etc.)
___ More supplies (art materials, puzzles, books)
___ Snacks provided
___ increased transportation provided
___ more field trips

APPENDIX C

FY 93 YEAR-END PARENT SURVEY
TABULATION OF SELECTED ITEMS

FY 93 Year-End Parent Survey

Results of selected items

Item 4

How would you rate the parent involvement program?

Inadequate	Adequate	Very helpful	Exceptional
8	5	4	1

Comments:

"Did not have an opportunity to participate or sign up after the fir few months."

"Many parents are not educators, so if they choose to volunteer at school I feel they need to be coached and told what is expected of them so the time spent with the children is fruitful."

"I wish I had been called to help out."

"I would have liked to have been included in more activities with th children."

"I would like to have a tape of the songs the children sing and I would like to know who my child's friends from preschool are."

"I would love to be involved in my son's education. I would like to help."

Item 6

How would you rate communications between the preschool and parents?

Inadequate	Adequate	Very Informative	Exception:
12	4	2	

Comments:

"Parents are uninformed."

"If I could get a calendar and notes a couple of days earlier, I coul plan my work schedule and hopefully attend more days at school."

"We could only make one conference this year due to work hours."

"It would be helpful if parents were informed so lessons could be